

Commissioner for Patents

REMARKS

Claims 1 to 3 and 5 to 17 are now in the application.

Claim 1 was amended by incorporating therein all of the limitations of claim 4. The Examiner has indicated that claim 4 did have patentable subject matter over the art cited. However, it is pointed out that intervening claims 2 and 3 were not incorporated into claim 1 as these recited certain limitations that were not necessary to render claim 1 patentable over the combination of references cited by the Examiner and namely U.S. Patent Nos. 5,020,512 and 6,412,447. The distinguishing feature of amended claim 1 relates to the gas vapor sensor being secured inside the circumferential side wall of the support base and wherein the sensor is provided with a gas sensing element secured to the circumferential side wall to detect the presence of explosive vapors adjacent the support surface.

In view of the amendments to claim 1 it was necessary to cancel claim 4 and to modify the dependencies of claims 5 and 6. New claim 15 is the combination of former claims 1, 2, 7 and 8. The Examiner has indicated that claim 8 also recited patentable subject matter if combined with claim 1 and its intervening claims. New claims 16 and 17 correspond to former claims 9 and 10 respectively but their dependency amended to be dependent upon new claims 15 and 16, respectively.

In view of the amendments made to the claims, it is not necessary to discuss the prior art cited by the Examiner but it has been noted for its teachings. The references made of record were also reviewed and Applicant agrees that these are of interest only.

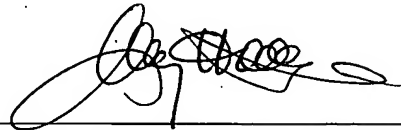
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In view of the above amendments, this application is now believed to be in condition for allowance and early notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

CLAUDE LESAGE

By:



April 28, 2004

(Date)

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